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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign Saviour, under whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hidden, You commended the light to shine out of darkness and gave us the gift of this new day. Forgive us when we ignore Your efforts to guide us. Help us to take the long view of our work and to not become weary of helping others.

Thank You, Lord, for teaching us to trust You and for opening our minds to the counsels of Your eternal wisdom. Increase our hunger for right living and teach us the power of gratitude.

Today keep our Senators within the circle of Your will, and may they be willing to be led by You. Guide them and give them the graciousness to strive to humbly serve one another, following Your example of lowliness.

We pray this in Your living Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN ENSIGN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The assistant journal clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 30, 2004.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENSIGN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, very briefly, today following morning business, at approximately 10:45, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4, the welfare reauthorization bill. At 12:15 we will proceed to a vote on the Snowe amendment on child care. Following that vote the Senate will recess for our weekly party lunches. For the remainder of the day the Senate will continue with the welfare bill and amendments thereto. The chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee will be here throughout the day to work through those amendments. Senators should therefore expect votes throughout the day. I encourage Members who have amendments to notify the bill managers in the hopes that we can process those amendments and move forward with this bill.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the final 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my leader time not be taken as part of the allocation for Members in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SYSTEMATIC ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT PREROGATIVES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last week I spoke about the White House's reaction to Richard Clarke's testimony before the 9/11 Commission. I am compelled today to rise again because the people around the President are systematically abusing the powers and the prerogatives of Government.

We all need to reflect seriously on what is going on, not in anger, not in partisanship, but in keeping with our responsibilities as Senators, with an abiding respect for the fundamental values of our democracy.

Richard Clarke did something extraordinary when he testified before the 9-11 Commission last week. He didn't try to escape blame, as so many routinely do.

Instead, he accepted his share of responsibility and offered his perceptions

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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